

News

United States
Department
of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Boston, MA 02203

Internet address: <http://www.bls.gov/ro1/home.htm#news>

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Media information: 617 565-2331

Fax-on-demand number: 617 565-9167

Fax code: 9112

USDL-06-008

Transmission of materials in this release
embargoed until 8:30 AM, Wednesday,
January 18, 2006

Consumer Price Index for Food and Energy Boston-Brockton-Nashua, MA-NH-ME-CT December 2005

Energy costs in the Boston metropolitan area decreased 3.6 percent in December 2005, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. The December decrease was the third consecutive monthly decline in energy prices following a 20.3 percent increase in September 2005, and it was largely attributed to lower prices for gasoline. Regional Commissioner Denis M. McSweeney noted that despite the recent monthly declines, overall energy costs in the Boston area have risen 17.3 percent in the past year.

Gasoline prices continued to fall in December, down 8.1 percent. The price of gasoline has decreased each month since spiking 33.6 percent in September. Over the year, gasoline prices were up 7.5 percent. The average price of a gallon of gasoline in Boston was \$2.168 in December, the lowest it has been since March 2005.

Prices were more stable in the other energy categories in December. Utility (piped) gas service edged down 0.2 percent over the month and electricity was unchanged. The over the year changes in these indexes were more substantial: Boston consumers faced electricity prices in December that were 20.9 percent higher and utility (piped) gas prices that were 32.0 percent higher than they were a year ago. In December, the Boston energy index on the 1982-84 base was 190.1 which means that Boston area consumers would have to spend \$19.01 for selected energy items that cost \$10.00 in 1982-84.

The cost of grocery food, as measured by the food at home index, increased 0.4 percent over the month in December. Price increases for items within the fruits and vegetables and meat, poultry, and fish categories largely drove the growth of the grocery food index. Overall, grocery prices were 1.4 percent higher than they were last December.

NOTE: Local area CPI indexes are the by-products of the national CPI program. Since each local area index is a small subset of the national index, it has a smaller sample size and is therefore subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than that for the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal factors. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility compared with the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. Additional information is available from the BLS Internet Web site at www.bls.gov/cpi or by calling the Boston Economic Analysis and Information office at 617-565-2327.

Free email subscription service! To receive the most recent monthly Consumer Price Indexes for the U.S. and Northeast, and bimonthly indexes for the Boston-Brockton-Nashua, MA-NH-ME-CT metropolitan area, please subscribe at <http://www.bls.gov/bls/list.htm> and select the notification titled New England CPI Summary (Boston). Boston Consumer Price Index for January will be released on Wednesday, February 22, 2006 at 8:30 AM.

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods

Boston-Brockton-Nashua, MA-NH-ME-CT (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from—		
	Oct. 2005	Nov. 2005	Dec. 2005	Dec. 2004	Oct. 2005	Nov. 2005
Expenditure category						
All items	-	218.6	-	-	-	-
All items (1967=100)	-	635.5	-	-	-	-
Food and beverages	-	200.3	-	-	-	-
Food	-	200.9	-	-	-	-
Food at home	197.5	195.6	196.4	1.4	-0.6	0.4
Food away from home	-	210.8	-	-	-	-
Alcoholic beverages	-	196.4	-	-	-	-
Housing	-	226.1	-	-	-	-
Shelter	264.0	262.6	262.9	2.3	-.4	.1
Rent of primary residence ¹	259.7	258.5	257.4	1.7	-.9	-.4
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ^{1 2}	277.8	277.2	276.9	1.4	-.3	-.1
Fuels and utilities	-	223.3	-	-	-	-
Fuels	189.2	197.4	196.4	24.5	3.8	-.5
Gas (piped) and electricity ¹	197.8	215.3	215.1	25.4	8.7	-.1
Electricity ¹	161.3	180.6	180.6	20.9	12.0	.0
Utility (piped) gas service ¹	265.2	278.8	278.3	32.0	4.9	-.2
Household furnishings and operations	-	126.7	-	-	-	-
Apparel	-	128.6	-	-	-	-
Transportation	-	171.0	-	-	-	-
Private transportation	-	170.7	-	-	-	-
Motor fuel	235.7	195.3	179.6	7.5	-23.8	-8.0
Gasoline (all types)	232.6	192.7	177.1	7.5	-23.9	-8.1
Gasoline, unleaded regular ³	231.4	191.0	175.4	7.3	-24.2	-8.2
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ^{3 4}	233.2	194.3	178.3	7.3	-23.5	-8.2
Gasoline, unleaded premium ³	228.6	192.1	178.6	9.0	-21.9	-7.0
Medical care	-	447.0	-	-	-	-
Recreation ⁵	-	112.2	-	-	-	-
Education and communication ⁵	-	118.8	-	-	-	-
Other goods and services	-	330.0	-	-	-	-
Commodity and service group						
All items	-	218.6	-	-	-	-
Commodities	-	164.9	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food and beverages	-	145.3	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	-	174.9	-	-	-	-
Durables	-	115.5	-	-	-	-
Services	-	267.2	-	-	-	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	-	208.9	-	-	-	-
All items less shelter	-	203.2	-	-	-	-
Commodities less food	-	147.4	-	-	-	-
Nondurables	-	186.4	-	-	-	-
Nondurables less food	-	175.6	-	-	-	-
Services less rent of shelter ²	-	284.4	-	-	-	-
Services less medical care services	-	253.0	-	-	-	-
Energy	209.1	197.2	190.1	17.3	-9.1	-3.6
All items less energy	-	223.9	-	-	-	-
All items less food and energy	-	229.1	-	-	-	-

¹ This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

² Index is on a November 1982=100 base.

³ Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

⁴ Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

⁵ Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

Regions defined as the four Census regions. See map in technical notes.

NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.